



Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, July 12, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All networks led with reports that one week has passed since the Kyushu region was hit by torrential rains, saying that about 20 people remain missing and between 1,200 and 1,300 people are still living in shelters.

INTERNATIONAL

U.S., Japan, ROK agree to strengthen cooperation to enhance defense capabilities

NHK reported at noon that defense officials of the U.S., Japan, and South Korea held a videoconference this morning following the recent announcement by North Korea that it successfully test-launched an ICBM for the first time. According to the network, the officials strongly denounced the ballistic missile launch as a clear violation of UNSC resolutions and agreed that North Korea's nuclear and missile development has become a grave threat to the peace and stability of not only Northeast Asia but also the broader region. The officials also reportedly agreed to strengthen trilateral cooperation to enhance defense capabilities and to continue to apply pressure and urge North Korea to respond to dialogue toward denuclearization.

Russiagate continues to rock White House

NHK's "Close-up Gendai +" reported that while six months have passed since President Trump took office, the White House continues to be shaken by the "Russiagate" scandal. Program host Takeda reported from Washington, focusing on the results of investigations by government agencies that point to Russia's involvement in the election. A group of Russian hackers reportedly targeted more

than 20 election systems in the U.S. during the election campaign. Takeda interviewed information warfare expert Molly McKew, who said what is most problematic is that the U.S. public came to know that Russia interfered in the election, saying this created uncertainty and a feeling of distrust among the public about the election. She also said Russia is engaged not only in cyberattacks but also information warfare aimed at changing people's thoughts and beliefs. The program also reported on Russia's international broadcasting channel "RT," which was established in 2015 and allegedly has strong connections to President Putin, saying that RT broadcast information that was advantageous to Trump and continually attacked his opponent, Hillary Clinton. The program said RT is broadcast in English and has about 8 million viewers in the U.S.

U.S. considering sanctioning third countries involved with North Korea

NHK reported this morning that following the recent announcement by the DPRK that it successfully test-launched an ICBM, the U.S. government is planning to call for a new sanctions resolution at the UNSC and also impose unilateral sanctions on companies and individuals in third countries that have dealings with North Korea. DOS spokesperson Nauert was quoted as saying at a press briefing on Tuesday: "Any new potential resolutions should be proportionate to the new escalation that has been faced as a result of North Korea's actions." In addition, the network said Nauert referred to the U.S. unilateral sanctions against Chinese and Russian companies imposed last month and said that the U.S. "continues to look at ways to shut down the money that is illegally going to North Korea" and that it is "willing to look at third-party sanctions and look at other nations and sanction them if they are involved in activities that help give money to the DPRK."

- [Abe diplomacy stalled on several fronts during Europe tour](#) (Mainichi)
- [Constitution commission delegation to study referendums in Europe](#) (Yomiuri)

ECONOMY

27 million more Takata airbags to be recalled in U.S.

NHK reported this afternoon that the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced on Tuesday that an additional 27 million Takata airbags that were manufactured from 2005 to 2012 will be recalled. The network said the airbags in question are installed in Nissan, Mazda, and Ford vehicles that were sold in the U.S. The network said since Takata airbags can explode when exposed to high temperature and humidity for a long period of time, Takata had previously recalled airbags that did not contain drying agents, but this time airbags with drying agents will also be recalled. The network explained that more than 10 people have been killed due to the malfunctioning of Takata inflators in the U.S., adding that a record number of more than 420 million vehicles will be recalled.

U.S. farm industry urges Trump administration not to adopt steel sanctions

NHK reported early this morning that a group of 19 U.S. agricultural lobbies, including the American Soybean Association, the National Association of Wheat Growers, and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, sent a joint letter to Commerce Secretary Ross on Tuesday asking the Trump administration not to restrict steel imports on the grounds that doing so could trigger a "trade war." The letter expressed concern by saying, "The potential for retaliation from these trading partners is very real."

- [Japan, EU ink cooperation pact for removing LNG resale restrictions](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Upgraded international trade headquarters to handle both TPP and Japan-EU EPA matters](#) (Sankei)
- ["TPP 11" differ in views on early effectuation of accord](#) (Mainichi)
- [Keidanren chief: Japan-EU EPA to have positive effect on "TPP 11" negotiations](#) (Nikkei)
- [Winners and losers in Japan-EU EPA GI brand protection](#) (Sankei)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on July 10-11](#) (Nikkei)
- [LDP hesitant to convene Diet budget committees to discuss Kake Gakuen scandal](#) (Mainichi)
- [Interview with former Agriculture Minister Hayashi on Abe administration, LDP presidential race](#) (Sankei)
- [Unusual reappointment of Minister's Secretariat chief at Ministry of Education](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Abe should face Diet over favoritism scandal](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Dispelling suspicion on strategic deregulation zone needed urgently](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Abe cabinet must shed arrogance, get results by implementing policies](#) (The Japan News)



New helipads at Northern Training Area used for first time

Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo reported that Okinawa Defense Bureau officials witnessed a USMC Osprey repeatedly taking off from and landing at two newly-built helipads at the Northern Training Area on Tuesday afternoon, underscoring that the U.S. military did not give prior notification of the use of the helipads to the Japanese side, including the two local municipalities where the facility is located. The defense bureau explained to Okinawa Times that such notification is not necessary given that the helipads have already been handed over to the U.S. side. Local residents are reportedly bracing for an increase in noise pollution based on the assumption that MV-22s and other U.S. military planes will use the helipads frequently.

- [Anti-FRF activists to visit U.S. next month](#) (Okinawa Times)
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